

# PATHFINDERS MONTHLY

Newsletter of the Office of Grants and Program Review  
September 2007

## Educational Opportunity Center Meets Regional Needs by Supporting Adult Educational Achievement

Historically, the Tennessee Valley region has ranked poorly on most measures of educational attainment. The low number of adults who hold a baccalaureate degree helps to perpetuate a cycle of poor educational attainment, low income, and meager employment options for residents. For nearly ten years, UTC has been at the forefront of the endeavor to break this cycle through the efforts of the Southern Appalachian Educational Opportunity Center (EOC). Housed in UTC's Center for Community Career Education, the EOC was founded in 1998 to serve 1,000 participants per year in an eight-county region including Walker, Dade, and Catoosa Counties in Georgia and Hamilton, Marion, Sequatchie, Bledsoe, and Grundy Counties in Tennessee. This year the EOC has been awarded \$263,047 from the U.S. Department of Education to continue this significant educational outreach program.

Since 1998, the EOC has served over 9,000 adults, 67% of whom are potential first-generation college attendees and/or struggle with low incomes. This program was designed in response to well-

documented needs in the target communities. Specifically, the program addresses chronically low levels of adult educational attainment, the challenges of poverty and low-income households, and unemployment levels that stem from the job market shift from manufacturing to high-skill jobs requiring post secondary education and training. The EOC assists adults at every point along the educational pipeline with the ultimate goal of preparing clients to complete baccalaureate degrees. Most impressive, of the thousands of disadvantaged clients served by the EOC, 67% of those who are college-ready have been admitted to a postsecondary education institution. This is particularly noteworthy since only 30% of adults from the target counties have participated in postsecondary coursework. In addition, statistics show that children who come from a family where the parents are college graduates nearly always go to college themselves. In the families the EOC serves, this breaks the generational cycle of poverty.

Under the leadership of Project Director Cynthia Wallace, the EOC staff provides

participants with guidance for choosing a college and a major; expert assistance with college applications and the financial aid process; career, educational, and personal counseling; and technology access and training. Since EOC funding began, 631 students have attended public universities, 2,639 students went to Community Colleges, 83 to private colleges, 663 to Vocational/Technical Schools, and 24 to proprietary schools. The staff of the Southern Appalachian EOC exemplify UTC's mission as a metropolitan institution. With four satellite offices located throughout the region, the EOC creates a strong presence for UTC in communities where residents may not have much experience with higher education. The EOC staff members are truly ambassadors for UTC and advocates for the benefits of higher education in the lives of the adults they serve. The program's unique focus on assessing and meeting the needs of individual clients through direct, personal contact and on-going support is the cornerstone of the program's long-term success.

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA**

**FUNDED GRANTS AND RESEARCH**  
**SEPTEMBER 1, 2007 SEPTEMBER 30, 2007**

**COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES**

|  |   |           |
|--|---|-----------|
| <b>DR. HERB BURHENN</b><br>River City Company                    | Urban Planning and Design Professorship                         | \$100,000 |
| <b>DR. JOEY SHAW</b><br>National Park Service                    | Survey of Vascular Plants on Darrow Ridge and Tar<br>Kiln Ridge | \$11,500  |
| <b>DRS. HENRY SPRATT AND JOEY SHAW</b><br>U.S. Geological Survey | UTC Collaborative Projects for the NBII SAIN Node               | \$68,750  |

**COLLEGE OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES**

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|--|---|-----------|
| <b>MS. TWYLER BOYKIN</b><br>U.S. Department of Education | Upward Bound Math and Science PRISM 2007-08 | \$250,000 |
| <b>MS. KAREN VANN</b><br>U.S. Department of Education    | Hamilton County Talent Search 2007-08       | \$226,599 |

**ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS**

|  |   |           |
|--|---|-----------|
| <b>DR. BETH DODD</b><br>Tennessee Department of<br>Education | HOSA Vocational Education Grant 2007-08 | \$8,668   |
| <b>MS. SHIRL GHOLSTON</b><br>U.S. Department of Education    | Student Support Services 2007-08        | \$271,066 |